

**2005 MICHIGAN BASS SURVEY RESULTS**

**PRESENTED TO THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
FISHERIES DIVISION**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2005, a survey concerning bass angling in Michigan was sent to a random sample of 10,000 people who had purchased a 2004 Michigan fishing license. The sample was comprised of both resident and non-resident anglers. After three mailings of the survey, 3750 completed surveys were returned along with 400 that were non-deliverable. The adjusted final response rate was 39.1%.

For the purpose of this report, “participants” refer to all those who were sent a survey, and “respondents” to those who responded to a particular question. While 3750 people returned a survey, not all responded to all questions. Due to rounding of values, column totals may not always equal 100%. Numbers in brackets indicate the number of respondents in that cell.

Michigan residents responded at a higher rate than non-residents (39% vs.33%). Table 1 provides the response rates for the four areas considered in this report. Respondents were older ( $O = 50$  years) than non-respondents ( $O = 43$ ). There was no difference in response rates between males and females.

Table 1. Response rates by region.

Upper Peninsula (N=463)	Northern Lower Peninsula (N=2044)	Southern Lower Peninsula (N=5769)	Out of State (N=1719)
41%	43%	37%	33%

Chi square =42.9, d.f.=3,  $p < 0.0001$

All of the thirteen different fishing license types available in 2004 were included in the sample. Table 2 provides the percentage of participants who had purchased each type and the final response rate for each. Because anglers could purchase more than one license during the season, the percentages of different license types do not add to 100.

Table 2. Response rates by license type.

TYPE OF LICENSE	Percent of participants*	Response Rate
Resident restricted	43% (4287)	33% (1394)
Senior Resident Restricted	5% (490)	49% (240)
Non-resident restricted	6% (605)	43% (257)
Resident upgraded to all species	2% (212)	39% (82)
Senior Resident upgraded to all species	0.1% (6)	33% (2)
Non-resident upgraded to all species	0.1% (9)	56% (5)
Resident all species	28% (2765)	45% (1233)
Senior Resident all species	5% (464)	59% (272)
Young angler all species	0.1% (10)	20% (2)
Non-resident all species	3% (266)	44% (118)
24-hour fishing license	12% (1184)	22% (255)
24-hour senior	0.1% (10)	40% (4)
Resident Military	0.0% (2)	50% (1)

\* percentages do not tally to 100 as some bought more than one type of license.

Question 12 on the survey related to interest in Michigan bass regulations. Those indicating they were not interested were requested to return the survey without answering the management questions which followed. Despite this request, 90 respondents indicated that they were not interested in bass

management, yet answered the management questions. These respondents have been included in management question analyses.

For the purpose of this report, “bass anglers” refers to those respondents who indicated that they had specifically targeted bass (i.e. selected methods, baits or location to increase their chances of catching bass- question 7 on the survey).

The analyses which follow include both, residents and non-residents license purchasers. Appendices A (page 16) and B (page 22) report the frequencies of responses to questions for each of these segments separately.

## 2 RESPONDENT PROFILE

As the survey was sent to Michigan anglers and not specifically bass anglers, segments with management implications were extracted. Table 3 provides the percentages of four main segments examined in this report.

Table 3. Segments considered in this report.

Segment of interest	Percent of all respondents
Targeted bass at least one day in 2004	52% (1946)
Member of a fishing organization	32% (1193)
Fished in at least one bass tournament in 2003-4	4% (149)
Expressed interest in Michigan bass management	50% (1764)

Fishing was ‘the most’ or ‘one of the more important’ recreational activities of 70% of respondents (Table 4). Bass angling was either ‘the most’ or ‘one of the more important’ types of angling for 28% of respondents (Table 5). The level of importance assigned to the recreational activity has been useful in identifying the pool of deer hunter respondents most likely to be recreational specialists (i.e., “most important...”). It is likely this will provide some indication of black bass specialists as well. The intensity of interest and participation among recreational specialists has special implications for management.

Table 6 reports the months that the different license purchasers fished (all species) in Michigan.

Table 4. Importance of fishing as a recreational activity for all respondents.

Fishing is my most important recreational activity	18%
Fishing is one of the more important recreational activities	52%
Fishing is no more important than any other of my recreation	21%
Fishing is less important than most of my other recreational	8%
Fishing is not at all important to me as a recreational activity	2%

Table 5. Comparison of bass angling to other types of fishing by all respondents.

The most important type of fishing I do.	9%
More important than most kinds of fishing I do.	19%
No more important than any other type of fishing I do.	40%
Less important than most other types of fishing I do	20%
Not at all important to me	13%

Table 6. Months fished (all species) by license type.<sup>1,2</sup>

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May 1- MDW <sup>3</sup>	MDW- May 31	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Resident Restricted (1394)	26%	25%	21%	30%	48%	48%	78%	79%	75%	56%	32%	14%	17%
Senior Resident Restricted (240)	12%	11%	10%	20%	38%	27%	69%	66%	64%	54%	29%	8%	7%
Non-resident restricted (257)	7%	7%	5%	11%	32%	32%	58%	61%	58%	47%	27%	7%	4%
Resident upgraded (82)	46%	45%	42%	50%	66%	63%	84%	87%	84%	73%	54%	39%	34%
Resident all species (1233)	41%	42%	38%	55%	62%	57%	78%	78%	79%	72%	48%	28%	29%
Senior resident all species (272)	29%	30%	23%	39%	46%	38%	69%	69%	70%	64%	40%	21%	21%
Non-resident all species (118)	13%	14%	12%	25%	45%	42%	68%	68%	68%	68%	34%	10%	8%
24 hour (255) <sup>4</sup>	8%	9%	7%	14%	20%	24%	50%	59%	49%	37%	24%	9%	7%

Note 1. Respondents were able to purchase more than one type of license, thus rows are not mutually exclusive.

Note 2. Senior Resident Upgraded, Non-resident Upgraded, Young Angler, 24-hour Senior and Resident Military license types are not included because of low respondent numbers.

Note 3. MDW= Memorial Day Weekend

Note 4. The yearly total for 24 hour license purchasers does not add to 100% because 40% of these anglers bought multiple 24 hour licenses and 8% bought other license types.

## 2.1 Tournament bass anglers

While 4% of all respondents had been in at least one bass tournament in the two years prior to the survey, 8% of bass anglers had participated in at least one bass tournament. For analyses which follow, tournament bass anglers are compared to anglers who fished for bass, but had not entered any tournaments. The mean number of tournaments entered by tournament bass anglers was 7.5, the median was 3 tournaments, while the mode was 1 tournament. Tournament bass anglers were more likely to be a member of a fishing organization than non-tournament bass anglers (59% vs. 34%). Tournament anglers were more likely to ice fish than non-tournament bass anglers (77% vs. 58%).

Of those who had fished for bass, tournament bass anglers were more likely to indicate more importance to fishing as a recreational activity (Table 7) and to indicate that bass fishing was the most important type of angling they did (Table 8). Tournament bass anglers also indicated more interest in Michigan bass management (Table 9).

Table 7. Importance of fishing as recreational activity by tournament bass angler type.

	Non-tournament bass anglers (1801)	Tournament bass anglers (143)
most important	21%	39%
One of the more important.	57%	55%
No more important than any other type of fishing I do.	16%	5%
Less important	5%	1%
Not at all important to me	1%	0%

Chi square =32.2, d.f.=4,  $p<0.001$

Table 8. Importance of bass angling to other types of fishing by tournament bass angler type.

	Non-tournament bass anglers (1795)	Tournament bass anglers (143)
The most important type of fishing I do.	14%	41%
More important than most kinds of fishing I do.	32%	38%
No more important than any other type of fishing I do.	43%	16%
Less important than most other types of fishing I do	11%	4%
Not at all important to me	1%	1%

Chi square =93.4, d.f.=4,  $p<0.0001$

Table 9. Interest in bass management by tournament bass angler type.

	Non-tournament bass anglers (1669)	Tournament bass anglers (134)
I have no interest in bass management in Michigan.	26%	13%
I am interested in bass management in Michigan	74%	87%

Chi square =9.9, d.f.=1,  $p=0.002$

### 3 MANAGEMENT QUESTIONS

The following section addresses the ten major management questions investigated by the survey.

#### 3.1 What is the fishing effort for black bass as reported by statewide anglers?

About half of the time spent fishing by bass anglers was spent in the pursuit of bass ( $O = 52\%$ ). Tournament bass anglers spent a greater percentage of their fishing time pursuing bass than non-tournament bass anglers (65% vs 51%,  $F=25.3$ ,  $d.f.=1$ , 1907,  $p<0.0001$ ). Table 10 shows the differences in bass effort between tournament and non-tournament anglers by categories. Anglers from the Upper Peninsula spent a smaller percentage of their time fishing for bass than other areas investigated (Table 11).

Table 10. Percentage all days fished spent fishing for bass by tournament bass angler type.

	Non-tournament bass anglers (1763)	Tournament bass anglers (140)
1-25%	32%	16%
26-50%	26%	18%
51-75%	15%	28%
76-99%	7%	18%
100%	20%	21%

Chi square =49.1,  $d.f.=4$ ,  $p<0.0001$

Table 11. Percentage of effort targeting bass by region of residence (all respondents).

Proportion of days spent fishing for bass	UP (181)	NLP (821)	SLP (2006)	Out of State (538)
0 days	60%	51%	42%	49%
1-25%	27%	19%	17%	9%
26-50%	5%	14%	15%	10%
51-75%	5%	7%	9%	8%
76-99%	0%	3%	5%	4%
100%	2%	6%	11%	20%

Chi square =166.8,  $d.f.=15$ ,  $p<0.0001$

The majority of bass angling done in Michigan was on inland lakes and streams. Over half of both tournament and non-tournament bass anglers fished exclusively on inland waters and lakes (Table 12). This was also the case for all four areas investigated. The trend was for residents of southern Michigan to fish these waters for bass more than UP anglers (Table 13).

Over half of tournament bass anglers and about three-quarters of non-tournament bass anglers did not spend any days fishing for bass on Great Lakes waters (Table 14). Bass anglers in the UP were more likely to fish on Great Lakes waters than anglers in the southern peninsula (Table 15).

Table 12. Distribution of effort on inland waters by tournament and non-tournament bass anglers .

Proportion of days spent on inland waters	Non-tournament bass anglers (1788)	Tournament bass anglers (143)
0 days	6%	3%
1-25%	9%	6%
26-50%	6%	6%
51-75%	3%	6%
76-99%	7%	24%
100%	68%	55%

Chi square =57.4, d.f.=5,  $p<0.0001$

Table 13. Distribution of effort on inland waters by bass anglers according to region of residence.

Proportion of days spent on inland waters	UP (74)	NLP (407)	SLP (1174)	Out of State (276)
0 days	18%	4%	5%	7%
1-25%	16%	11%	9%	7%
26-50%	8%	6%	6%	6%
51-75%	4%	3%	4%	4%
76-99%	3%	10%	9%	5%
100%	51%	66%	68%	72%

Chi square =42.7, d.f.=15,  $p<0.0001$

Table 14. Distribution of effort on Great Lakes waters by tournament and non-tournament bass anglers .

Proportion of days spent on G.L. waters	Non-tournament bass anglers (1777)	Tournament bass anglers (141)
0 days	76%	58%
1-25%	10%	33%
26-50%	4%	3%
51-75%	1%	3%
76-99%	2%	1%
100%	6%	2%

Chi square =68.3, d.f.= 5,  $p<0.0001$



Table 15. Distribution of effort on Great Lakes waters by bass anglers according to region of residence.

Proportion of days spent on G.L. waters	UP (74)	NLP (400)	SLP (1169)	Out of State (275)
0 days	64%	75%	75%	79%
1-25%	16%	14%	12%	9%
26-50%	4%	3%	5%	4%
51-75%	1%	1%	1%	1%
76-99%	1%	2%	2%	1%
100%	14%	5%	5%	6%

Chi square =19.3, d.f.=15, p=0.200

### 3.2 To what extent are bass anglers currently keeping and releasing legal-sized bass during harvest season?

A greater percentage of respondents who did not target bass indicated releasing 'less than 25%' of the bass they catch than those who were bass anglers (Table 16). However, a greater percentage of non-bass anglers than bass anglers also indicated releasing 100% of the bass they catch (Table 16). Tournament bass anglers were more likely to release all of the bass they catch than non-tournament bass anglers (Table 17). Lower Peninsula anglers and non-resident anglers were more likely to release all of the bass they catch than UP anglers (Table 18).

Table 16. Percentage of legal sized bass released by whether the angler specifically targeted bass.

Percent of legal bass released	Did not target bass in 2004 (696)	Targeted bass at least one day in 2004 (i.e. bass anglers) (1920)
<25%	36%	23%
26-49%	2%	7%
50-74%	3%	6%
75-89%	2%	7%
90-99%	8%	15%
100%	48%	43%

Chi square =101.9, d.f.= 5, p<0.0001

Table 17. Percentage of legal sized bass released by tournament and non-tournament bass anglers.

Percent of legal bass released	Non-tournament bass anglers (1779)	Tournament bass anglers (147)
<25%	24%	9%
26-49%	7%	4%
50-74%	7%	1%
75-89%	7%	6%
90-99%	15%	16%
100%	41%	62%

Chi square =33.5, d.f.=5 p<0.0001

Table 18. Percentage of legal sized bass released by anglers according to region of residence (all anglers).

Percent of legal bass released	UP (115)	NLP (556)	SLP (1541)	Out of State (404)
<25%	27%	31%	25%	23%
26-49%	7%	7%	5%	5%
50-74%	12%	6%	5%	5%
75-89%	3%	6%	5%	7%
90-99%	19%	12%	14%	11%
100%	31%	39%	46%	49%

Chi square = 37.5, d.f.= 15, p=0.001

### 3.3 To what extent are anglers aware of C&IR restrictions during closed season?

The majority of all respondents were aware of the current bass catch and release regulations. Of all bass anglers, 75% were aware of the current catch and release regulations, 16% thought they could catch and release bass before the May opener, and 9% had no idea what the regulations were. While tournament bass anglers were more aware than non-tournament bass anglers of the current regulations, nearly three-quarters of non-tournament bass anglers knew them (Table 19). Anglers who indicated more importance on fishing as a recreational activity were more aware of the current bass catch and release restrictions (Table 20).

Table 19. Awareness of current bass catch and release regulations by tournament bass angler type.

	Non-tournament bass anglers (1288)	Tournament bass anglers (119)
Aware of current catch and release regulations	74%	87%
thought it legal to catch and release prior to the opener	17%	10%
were unaware of the current regulations	9%	3%

Chi square =9.2, d.f.=2, p=0.01

Table 20. Awareness of current preseason catch and release regulations by importance of fishing (all respondents).

	most important (424)	one of more important (1107)	no more important than any other (258)	less important (68)	not at all important (11)	TOTAL (1868)
Aware of current catch and release regulations	77%	75%	70%	60%	36%	74%
thought it legal to catch and release prior to the opener	13%	15%	13%	13%	0%	14%
were unaware of the current regulations	10%	10%	17%	27%	64%	12%

Chi square =56.6, d.f.=8, p<0.0001

### 3.4 What is the demand for C&IR season opportunities among MI black bass anglers?

Half (50%) of the respondents interested in Michigan bass management approved or strongly approved keeping the current harvest season and not adding a catch and immediate release season, with 25% desiring the change and 25% being undecided. While tournament bass anglers were more likely to desire a change than non-tournament bass anglers, there was no clear majority. About 36% approved of not making a change and 42% disapproved of leaving the regulations unchanged (Table 21). Lakefront property owners were more likely to want the season to stay as it is than those not owning lakefront property (Table 22). While *statistically* different, anglers residing in different regions were not *substantially* different in their views on changing the current season (Table 23).

Table 21. Approval/disapproval among tournament and non-tournament bass anglers for a decision to keep the current harvest season and not add a catch and immediate release season.

"Leave the current season opener; do NOT add a C&IR season."	Non-tournament bass angler (1368)	Tournament bass angler (123)
Strongly approve	23%	17%
approve	27%	19%
undecided	25%	20%
disapprove	17%	22%
Strongly disapprove	8%	20%

Chi square =27.0, d.f.=4, p<0.0001

Table 22. Approval/disapproval for a decision to keep the current harvest season and not add a catch and immediate release season by lakefront property ownership(all respondents).

"Leave the current season opener; do NOT add a C&IR season."	Own lakefront property (393)	Do Not own lakefront property (1575)
Strongly approve	30%	21%
approve	28%	27%
undecided	22%	27%
disapprove	14%	17%
Strongly disapprove	7%	8%

Chi square =16.8 , d.f.=4, p=0.002

Table 23. Approval/disapproval for a decision to keep the current harvest season and not add a catch and immediate release season by region of residence (all respondents).

"Leave the current season opener; do NOT add a C&IR season."	UP (88)	NLP (426)	SLP (1220)	Out of State (265)
Strongly approve	30%	27%	22%	19%
approve	24%	25%	27%	29%
undecided	34%	24%	26%	25%
disapprove	10%	16%	17%	18%
Strongly disapprove	2%	8%	8%	9%

Chi square =19.0, d.f.=12, p=0.088

### 3.5 How many anglers would increase their fishing activity if a legal C&IR season were available in spring?

Just under a third (31%) of those interested in Michigan bass management indicated that they would fish either 'many more' or 'a few more' days if an early catch and immediate release season was opened. Under half (43%) indicated that they would fish about the same and 26% would not fish that period. Tournament bass anglers were more likely to indicate fishing more days if this season was created than non-tournament bass anglers (Table 24). No difference was found across regions for this management question (Table 25).

Table 24. Effect on the number of days fished if early catch and immediate release season was implemented by tournament bass angler type.

	Non-tournament bass anglers (1371)	Tournament bass anglers (123)
Many more days	9%	27%
A few more days	26%	40%
About the same	42%	23%
I would not fish that period	23%	11%

Chi square =63.4, d.f.=3, p<0.0001

Table 25. Effect on the number of days fished if early catch and immediate release season was implemented by region of residence (all respondents).

	UP (88)	NLP (423)	SLP (1220)	Out of State (266)
Many more days	6%	8%	9%	7%
A few more days	17%	20%	25%	22%
About the same	49%	45%	42%	40%
I would not fish that period	28%	28%	24%	31%

Chi square =15.9, d.f.=9, p=0.068

### 3.6 How are C&R opportunities valued in comparison to opening date of harvest season?

Over half (55%) of respondents interested in Michigan bass management disapproved of the concept of trading the Memorial Day weekend opener for an earlier catch and release season. Only 25% approved of the trade-off and 20% were undecided. No difference was found between tournament and non-tournament bass anglers, with over half of both groups disapproving of this tradeoff (Table 26).

Table 26. Approval/disapproval for trading the Memorial Day weekend opener for an early catch and immediate release season by tournament bass anglers type.

	Non-tournament bass anglers (1369)	Tournament bass anglers (123)
Strongly approve	9%	10%
approve	17%	14%
undecided	17%	15%
disapprove	25%	23%
Strongly disapprove	31%	39%

Chi square =3.5, d.f.=4, p=0.475

### 3.7 Would anglers approve if some larger lakes were given C&R seasons?

Nearly two thirds (62%) of respondents interested in Michigan bass management approved of early spring catch and release seasons on certain Michigan lakes, if the biologists were confident bass populations on that lake would not be harmed. While tournament anglers were more likely to 'strongly approve' of this management choice, non-tournament bass anglers also showed much support (Table 27).

Table 27. Approval/disapproval of opening some larger lakes to a catch and immediate release season by tournament angler type.

	Non-tournament bass anglers (1304)	Tournament bass anglers (118)
Strongly approve	27%	47%
approve	37%	29%
undecided	12%	8%
disapprove	14%	9%
Strongly disapprove	11%	8%

Chi square =21.3, d.f.=4, p<0.0001

### 3.8 Does the traditional nature of the bass season opening date appear to have a value to anglers?

Just under a third (31%) of respondents interested in Michigan bass management would be strongly opposed to changing the current Memorial Day weekend opener, with a further 25% preferring that it not be changed. Tournament and non-tournament bass anglers did not differ on changing the season opener (Table 28). While there were regional differences, the majority of all regions would like the season opener to stay the same (Table 29).

Table 28. Importance of Memorial Day weekend opener and opinions on changing it by region of residence (all respondents).

	Non-tournament bass anglers (1366)	Tournament bass anglers (123)
Very important to me; I would be strongly opposed to changing it	33%	39%
Somewhat important; I would prefer it not be changed	25%	22%
Slightly important; but changing it would not be a big deal	20%	15%
Not at all important; I don't care whether it is changed	18%	20%
I am undecided	3%	5%

Chi square =4.2, d.f.=4, p=0.379

Table 29. Importance of Memorial Day weekend opener and opinions on changing it by region of residence (all respondents).

	UP (86)	NLP (425)	SLP (1215)	Out of State (262)
Very important to me; I would be strongly opposed to changing it	35%	31%	32%	26%
Somewhat important; I would prefer it not be changed	19%	28%	26%	19%
Slightly important; but changing it would not be a big deal	30%	18%	19%	23%
Not at all important; I don't care whether it is changed	15%	20%	19%	23%
I am undecided	1%	3%	4%	9%

Chi square =38.1, d.f.= 12, p<0.0001

### 3.9 What is the angler demand for opportunity to harvest bass in winter?

Just under half (41%) of those interested in bass management in Michigan indicated that they did not ice fish. Considering only those who did ice fish, just under half (47%) indicated that a winter bass season would not affect their enjoyment of ice fishing, while 21% said it would add greatly to their enjoyment. Tournament bass anglers who ice fished were more likely than their counterparts to indicate that a winter season would not affect their enjoyment of ice fishing (Table 30). No difference was found between regions on this question (Table 31).

Table 30. Effect of winter season for bass on ice fishing enjoyment by ice fishing tournament bass angler type.

	Non-tournament bass anglers (797)	Tournament bass anglers (83)
Add greatly to my winter ice fishing enjoyment	21%	16
Add somewhat to my winter ice fishing enjoyment	19%	12%
Add slightly to my winter ice fishing enjoyment	10%	8%
Would not affect my enjoyment of winter ice fishing	45%	64%
Undecided	5%	0%

Chi square =13.8, d.f.=4 p=0.008

Table 31. Effect of winter season for bass on ice fishing enjoyment by region of residence for those bass anglers who also ice-fished .

	UP (58)	NLP (299)	SLP (714)	Out of State (109)
Add greatly to my winter ice fishing enjoyment	17%	27%	20%	16%
Add somewhat to my winter ice fishing enjoyment	14%	17%	16%	17%
Add slightly to my winter ice fishing enjoyment	12%	7%	12%	7%
Would not affect my enjoyment of winter ice fishing	53%	46%	46%	53%
Undecided	3%	3%	6%	6%

Chi square =18.9, d.f.= 12 p=0.090

Nearly two thirds (65%) of respondents who ice-fished and had an interest in Michigan bass management indicated that a winter bass season would have no effect on the amount of fishing they do in the winter, while 20% indicated it would greatly or somewhat increase the amount of winter angling they do. Tournament and non-tournament bass anglers did not differ with the majority indicating it would have no effect (Table 32).

Table 32. Effect of winter bass season would have on days winter fishing by ice fishing tournament bass angler type.

	Non-tournament bass anglers (1093)	Tournament bass anglers (85)
I would not fish at this time	3%	5%
Greatly increase	6%	8%
Somewhat increase	15%	4%
Slightly increase	10%	12%
No effect	64%	71%
Undecided	2%	1%

Chi square =9.2, d.f.=5 p=0.103

Over half (55%) of ice fishing respondents with an interest in Michigan bass management would disapprove of delaying the opener of the bass season to provide 10 extra weeks of winter bass angling opportunity. Tournament bass anglers were more likely to disapprove of this option than non-tournament bass anglers, however, a majority of non-tournament anglers also disapproved (Table 33).

Table 33. Approval/disapproval of delaying the bass harvest opener to have 10 extra weeks of winter harvest by ice fishing tournament bass angler type.

	Non-tournament bass anglers (1085)	Tournament bass anglers (85)
Strongly approve	7%	2%
Approve	18%	11%
Undecided	20%	9%
Disapprove	29%	21%
Strongly disapprove	27%	57%

Chi square =35.1, d.f.=5,  $p<0.0001$

### 3.10 What choice would anglers make between variable regulations to allow for a greater diversity of fishing around the state or consistent regulations that over protect and restrict opportunities in some situations?

Given a choice of consistent or variable statewide regulations, 39% of all respondents desired more consistency and 50% wanted more variability. Tournament bass anglers did not differ from non-tournament bass anglers on this issue (Table 34).

Table 34. Preference for consistent versus variable fishing regulations by tournament bass angler type.

	Non-tournament bass anglers (1364)	Tournament bass anglers (124)	All bass anglers (1488)
Strongly prefer consistent over variable regulations	23%	15%	23%
somewhat prefer consistent over variable regulations	16%	16%	16%
undecided	9%	13%	9%
somewhat prefer variable over consistent regulations	28%	30%	28%
strongly prefer variable over consistent regulations	23%	27%	23%

Chi square =6.7, d.f.=4  $p=0.154$

Respondents who were interested in Michigan bass management were fairly evenly split on their opinion of the current levels of variability and consistency of regulations. A quarter (25%) thought regulations needed to be more consistent, 28% thought they needed to be more variable, 28% thought the right mix of consistency and variability now existed, while 19% were undecided. Tournament and non-tournament bass anglers did not differ on this question (Table 35).



Table 35. Opinions on how current regulations should be changed by tournament bass angler type.

	Non-tournament bass anglers (1361)	Tournament bass anglers (124)
need to be much more consistent statewide	11%	9%
need to be somewhat more consistent statewide	15%	11%
have about the right level of consistency and variability st	29%	32%
need to be somewhat more variable statewide	22%	22%
need to be much more variable statewide	8%	12%
I am undecided	16%	14%

Chi square =4.8, d.f.= 5, p=0.445

## **APPENDIX A: MICHIGAN RESIDENT RESPONSES TO THE 2005 BLACK BASS SURVEY**

1. How important is fishing to you in comparison to all of your other recreational activities?(Please check one)

16.5% (526)--FISHING IS MY MOST IMPORTANT RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY.

51.7% (1644)--FISHING IS ONE OF THE MORE IMPORTANT RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES I PARTICIPATE IN.

22.0% (699)-- FISHING IS NO MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANY OTHER OF MY RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES.

7.8% (247)-- FISHING IS LESS IMPORTANT THAN MOST OF MY OTHER RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES.

1.9% (60) --FISHING IS NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT TO ME AS A RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY.

2. Compared to the other fishing that you do, how important is fishing for bass? (Please check one)

BASS FISHING IS...

8.4% (266)--THE MOST IMPORTANT TYPE OF FISHING I DO.

18.4% (584)-- MORE IMPORTANT THAN MOST KINDS OF FISHING I DO.

40.4% (1282) --NO MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANY OTHER TYPE OF FISHING I DO.

19.6% (623) --LESS IMPORTANT THAN MOST OTHER TYPES OF FISHING I DO

13.1% (417) --NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT TO ME

3. Please check any of the following fishing-related organizations that you have been a member of during the past three years (Check all that apply).

68.9% (2197) I HAVE NOT BEEN A MEMBER OF A FISHING-RELATED ORGANIZATION IN THE LAST THREE YEARS

5.7% (183) B.A.S.S.

0.3% (9) MICHIGAN BASS FEDERATION

0.1% (4) MICHIGAN MUSKY ALLIANCE

2.0% (65) MICHIGAN STEELHEADERS

6.8% (216) MUCC

0.7% (22) NATIONAL BASS ANGLERS ASSOCIATION

5.2% (167) NORTH AMERICAN FISHING CLUB

2.8% (89) TROUT UNLIMITED

4.7% (151) LOCAL OR REGIONAL SPORTSMAN'S ORGANIZATION

3.1% (98) OTHER (PLEASE NAME) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you own lakefront property in Michigan? 19.3% (606) YES 80.6% (2537) NO

**If Yes, check the residence type:**

5.9% (35)	47.1% (279)	45.8% (271)
NOT A RESIDENCE	PRIMARY RESIDENCE	RECREATIONAL (SEASONAL) RESIDENCE

5. Please circle the periods that you typically fish in Michigan (Consider all species).

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY 1ST TO MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND	MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND TO MAY 31	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
31.7% (989)	31.7% (987)	27.1% (845)	40.2% (1253)	53.4% (1663)	50.0% (1559)	78.2% (2436)	78.9% (2458)	77.2% (2406)	63.7% (1986)	39.1% (1219)	19.7% (613)	21.6% (672)

6. In 2004, on about how many days did you fish (for any species) in Michigan? (If none write "0")

97% of Michigan respondents who purchased a fishing license fished in 2004. The range was 0-360 days with a mean of 38 days, median of 25 days and mode of 30 days.

7. About how many of those days did you fish for bass; that is, you selected methods, baits, location, etc. to increase your chances of catching bass? **(If none write "0" and skip to item 12)**

52% of respondents fished for bass. The range was from 1 to 250 days. The mean was 20.9 days, the median and mode were both 10 days.

8. About what portion (percent) of the days you fished for bass in 2004 were on inland lakes or streams?

95% of all Michigan bass angler respondents fished inland lakes and streams with 67% fishing exclusively on these waters.

9. About what portion (percent) of the days you fished for bass in 2004 were on Great Lakes waters?

26% of all Michigan bass angler respondents fished bass on the great lakes, with 6% fishing exclusively on these waters.

10. How many total organized bass fishing tournaments in Michigan did you participate in during 2003 and 2004 combined? (If none, write "0")

7.5% (n=121) of Michigan bass angler respondents fished in at least one tournament. The number they fished ranged from 1 to 60 tournaments. The mean was 7.6 tournaments, median 2 tournaments and the mode was 1 tournament.

11. During the season when it is legal to keep bass, what percent of the legal-sized bass that you catch do you usually *release*? (Please check one)

26.5% (588) ..... LESS THAN 25%

5.7% (126) ..... 25 - 49%

5.7% (126) ..... 50 - 74%

5.3% (117) ..... 75 - 89%

13.5% (300) ..... 90 - 99%

43.1% (955) ..... 100%

**12. THE REST OF THIS SURVEY CONCERNS BASS FISHING AND POSSIBLE BASS SEASON CHANGES IN MICHIGAN. IF YOU HAVE NO INTEREST IN THESE BASS ISSUES, PLEASE CHECK THE STATEMENT BELOW AND RETURN THIS SURVEY IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED.**

48.6% (1447) I HAVE NO INTEREST IN BASS MANAGEMENT IN MICHIGAN. (PLEASE RETURN THE SURVEY)

51.3% (1528) I AM INTERESTED IN BASS MANAGEMENT IN MICHIGAN. (PLEASE CONTINUE WITH THE SURVEY)

### Should Bass Fishing Regulations be Consistent or Variable Statewide?

*Consistent regulations:* It would be simpler to have one bass fishing regulation that fits all lakes in the state. Anglers would need to be aware of only a few rules and regulations. But a statewide regulation that adequately protects fish in one lake from over harvest may "overprotect" fish in another lake that do not need that much protection.

*Variable regulations:* Regulations could be more restrictive in lakes or regions where they are needed to protect the fisheries and less restrictive in other areas. This provides more flexibility and opportunity for anglers, but they would have to stay informed of the differences in regulations statewide if they fish in more than one area.

*The next 3 questions relate to the choice between consistent and variable regulations.*

Please consider the following two options and answer question 13 below:

- A. Provide consistent statewide regulations even though they may overprotect bass in some parts of Michigan in order to adequately protect bass in other lakes or regions.
- B. Provide regulations that vary among lakes and regions to provide more fishing opportunity around the state even though regulations would be more complex for the angler.

13. Please indicate whether you prefer one of the above options more than the other by checking one of the following:

22.4% (384) I STRONGLY PREFER A MORE THAN B	
17.2% (294) I SOMEWHAT PREFER A MORE THAN B	
10.8% (185) I AM UNDECIDED	
28.1% (481) I SOMEWHAT PREFER B MORE THAN A	
21.2% (363) I STRONGLY PREFER B MORE THAN A	

14. As it affects you and your own fishing opportunities, what is your opinion regarding the current level of statewide consistency in the Michigan bass fishing regulations? (Please check one.)

Michigan bass fishing regulations

11.5% (196) need to be much more consistent statewide  
14.1% (240) need to be somewhat more consistent statewide  
28.2% (482) have about the right level of consistency and variability statewide  
20.6% (351) need to be somewhat more variable statewide  
7.4% (127) need to be much more variable statewide  
18.0% (307) I am undecided

15. How strongly would you approve or disapprove of having spring catch and release bass seasons only on certain Michigan lakes if fisheries biologists were confident that bass populations wouldn't be harmed?

24.6% (403) STRONGLY APPROVE	36.3% (595) APPROVE	13.5% (222) UNDECIDED	13.5% (221) DISAPPROVE	12.0% (196) STRONGLY DISAPPROVE
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**Please refer to the following information for the rest of the survey:**

**Harvest**

- C legal sized bass are kept by the angler for eating and/or trophies and are not released back into the water.

**Catch & Immediate Release or “C& IR”**

- C a bass is immediately returned back to the water once the hook is removed.

**Catch and Delayed Release or “C& DR”**

- C a bass is kept alive for a period (e.g. in a live well) and released later.

**How do Harvest and C& IR and C& DR impact the bass fishery?**

Harvest permanently removes bass. The size and number of bass removed are regulated to protect the fishery.

Research shows that most immediately released bass survive. However, some nest destruction by other fish occurs when adult bass guarding the nests are removed even for a short time (immediately released). Thus, C & IR during spawning time (approximately late April-mid June in Michigan) may impact on bass populations in some lakes or streams.

Without proper handling, delayed release can kill more bass than immediate release. The greatest risk is to nests left unguarded when adult bass cannot return quickly to protect them. When bass are

**Current preseason bass regulations:**

Except for select waters in Genesee, Muskegon, Newaygo, and Oakland counties, and on L. St. Clair, St. Clair River, and the Detroit River:

- C the bass season does not open until the Saturday before Memorial Day in May.
- C bass accidentally caught before the opener must be released immediately.

16. Which best describes your understanding of the preseason bass regulation before reading the explanation above? Please check one:

75.1% (1222) I KNEW IT WAS ILLEGAL TO FISH SPECIFICALLY FOR BASS BEFORE THE OPENER AND THAT ACCIDENTAL CATCHES HAD TO BE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY.

14.6% (238) I THOUGHT IT WAS LEGAL TO TRY TO CATCH BASS BEFORE THE OPENER AS LONG AS YOU RELEASED THEM IMMEDIATELY.

10.1% (165) I HAD NO IDEA WHAT THE REGULATIONS WERE REGARDING FISHING FOR BASS BEFORE THE OPENER.

**Current bass season:**

On most Michigan waters, the current seasons allow fishing for bass from the Saturday before Memorial Day to December 31 (from 218 to 226 days); 5 bass of 14 inches can be kept each day.

**Some legal catch and immediate release (C&IR) opportunity could be provided during spawning season if the impact on bass numbers was offset in some way.**

17. How important is it to you to have a legal catch and immediate release (C& IR) bass season sometime in April and May before the legal harvest season opens? (Please check one)

21.9% (360) VERY IMPORTANT	19.6% (323) SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	14.5% (239) SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT	43.9% (723) NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
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18. If a catch and immediate release (C& IR) bass season was established in the spring before the bass harvest season opened, would it affect the amount of fishing you do during that time? (Please check one)

COMPARED TO THE NUMBER OF DAYS I USUALLY FISH DURING THAT PERIOD, I WOULD PROBABLY FISH..

8.5% (147) MANY MORE DAYS	23.2% (403) A FEW MORE DAYS	43.3% (750) ABOUT THE SAME	24.9% (431) I WOULD NOT FISH IN THAT PERIOD
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19. How strongly would you approve or disapprove of a decision to keep the current harvest season and not add a legal catch and immediate release season?

23.3% (405) STRONGLY APPROVE	26.3% (457) APPROVE	26.0% (452) UNDECIDED	16.3% (283) DISAPPROVE	7.9% (137) STRONGLY DISAPPROVE
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20. If an early catch and immediate release (C& IR) season of 4 to 5 weeks was opened, there are tradeoffs that would be necessary to offset the impact on bass populations. One possible tradeoff would be to delay the start of the harvest season by 2 to 3 weeks after the Memorial Day Weekend. (NOTE: While the proposed C&IR opportunities would apply to the St. Clair R., Detroit R. and L. St. Clair, the opening day of harvest season on these waters would remain the same.)

a) How strongly would you approve or disapprove of delaying the harvest season in order to have a C& IR season as described above? (Please check one)

7.6% (132) STRONGLY APPROVE	16.9% (293) APPROVE	19.7% (341) UNDECIDED	25.3% (438) DISAPPROVE	30.6% (530) STRONGLY DISAPPROVE
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b) How likely is it that you would still buy your annual fishing license if the above season changes were made? (Please check one)

74.1% (1280) VERY LIKELY	10.5% (182) SOMEWHAT LIKELY	9.5% (165) UNDECIDED	2.8% (49) SOMEWHAT UNLIKELY	3.0% (52) VERY UNLIKELY
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21. Bass season has traditionally opened on the Saturday before Memorial Day. How important is it to you that this traditional opening date be left unchanged? (Please check one)

- 31.9% (553) VERY IMPORTANT TO ME; I WOULD BE STRONGLY OPPOSED TO CHANGING IT
- 25.7% (445) SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT; I WOULD PREFER IT NOT BE CHANGED
- 19.6% (340) SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT; BUT CHANGING IT WOULD NOT BE A BIG DEAL
- 18.7% (324) NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT; I DON'T CARE WHETHER IT IS CHANGED
- 3.7% (64) I AM UNDECIDED

22. Another option for increasing bass fishing may be to extend harvest season into the winter months (January through March) for ice fishing. How would a winter season allowing the harvest of bass affect the enjoyment you derive from winter ice fishing? (Please check one)

- 38.1% (661) I DO NOT ICE FISH
- 13.4% (233) ADD GREATLY TO MY WINTER ICE FISHING ENJOYMENT
- 10.2% (177) ADD SOMEWHAT TO MY WINTER ICE FISHING ENJOYMENT
- 6.4% (111) ADD SLIGHTLY TO MY WINTER ICE FISHING ENJOYMENT
- 28.7% (498) WOULD NOT AFFECT MY ENJOYMENT OF WINTER ICE FISHING
- 3.0% (52) UNDECIDED

23. How would a harvest season for bass in January through March most likely affect the amount of fishing you do in winter?

26.1% (455) I WOULD NOT FISH AT THIS TIME	4.3% (74) GREATLY INCREASE	9.2% (160) SOMEWHAT INCREASE	6.4% (111) SLIGHTLY INCREASE	51.8% (901) NO EFFECT	2.1% (37) UNDECIDED
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24. Would you approve or disapprove of a proposal to delay the regular harvest season opener by 2 weeks in order to provide 10 weeks of winter harvest fishing for bass?

5.1% (88) STRONGLY APPROVE	13.7% (238) APPROVE	19.3% (334) UNDECIDED	28.9% (501) DISAPPROVE	32.9% (571) STRONGLY DISAPPROVE
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**THANK YOU.** If you have any comments on Michigan's bass regulations, please write them in the space below.

At the completion of this study, the results will be posted on the MDNR fisheries web page:

<http://www.michigan.gov/dnr> .

## **APPENDIX B: NON-RESIDENT RESPONSES TO THE 2005 MICHIGAN BLACK BASS SURVEY**

1. How important is fishing to you in comparison to all of your other recreational activities?(Please check one)

26.3% (132)--FISHING IS MY MOST IMPORTANT RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY.

55.0% (308)--FISHING IS ONE OF THE MORE IMPORTANT RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES I PARTICIPATE IN.

13.8% (77)-- FISHING IS NO MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANY OTHER OF MY RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES.

7.0% (39)-- FISHING IS LESS IMPORTANT THAN MOST OF MY OTHER RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES.

0.7% (4) --FISHING IS NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT TO ME AS A RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY.

2. Compared to the other fishing that you do, how important is fishing for bass? (Please check one)

BASS FISHING IS...

10.2% (57)--THE MOST IMPORTANT TYPE OF FISHING I DO.

21.6% (121)-- MORE IMPORTANT THAN MOST KINDS OF FISHING I DO.

38.5% (215) --NO MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANY OTHER TYPE OF FISHING I DO.

20.4% (114) --LESS IMPORTANT THAN MOST OTHER TYPES OF FISHING I DO

9.3% (52) --NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT TO ME

3. Please check any of the following fishing-related organizations that you have been a member of during the past three years (Check all that apply).

64.2% (360) I HAVE NOT BEEN A MEMBER OF A FISHING-RELATED ORGANIZATION IN THE LAST THREE YEARS

10.2% (57) B.A.S.S.

0.5% (3) MICHIGAN BASS FEDERATION

0.2% (1) MICHIGAN MUSKY ALLIANCE

0.5% (3) MICHIGAN STEELHEADERS

1.6% (9) MUCC

1.1% (6) NATIONAL BASS ANGLERS ASSOCIATION

6.8% (38) NORTH AMERICAN FISHING CLUB

4.6% (26) TROUT UNLIMITED

7.5% (42) LOCAL OR REGIONAL SPORTSMAN'S ORGANIZATION

6.8% (38) OTHER (PLEASE NAME) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you own lakefront property in Michigan? 13.4% (74) YES 86.6% (477) No

**If Yes, check the residence type:**

12.3% (9)	2.7% (2)	83.6% (61)
NOT A RESIDENCE	PRIMARY RESIDENCE	RECREATIONAL (SEASONAL) RESIDENCE

5. Please circle the periods that you typically fish in Michigan (Consider all species).

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY 1ST TO MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND	MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND TO MAY 31	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
7.5% (41)	7.7% (42)	7.0% (38)	14.5% (79)	30.0% (163)	30.0% (163)	56.8% (309)	61.8% (336)	56.8% (309)	48.3% (263)	28.9% (157)	8.8% (48)	4.6% (25)



6. In 2004, on about how many days did you fish (for any species) in Michigan? (If none write "0")

98% of non-resident license purchasers fished in Michigan in 2004. The range was 0-250 days with a mean of 15.2 days, median of 8 days and mode of 5 days.

7. About how many of those days did you fish for bass; that is, you selected methods, baits, location, etc. to increase your chances of catching bass? **(If none write "0" and skip to item 12)**

50% of non-resident respondents fished for bass. The range for those who did fish for bass was from 1 to 100 days. The mean was 11.6 days, the median 7 days and the mode was 10 days.

8. About what portion (percent) of the days you fished for bass in 2004 were on inland lakes or streams?

94% of non-resident respondent bass anglers fished inland lakes and streams. 72% fished exclusively on these waters.

9. About what portion (percent) of the days you fished for bass in 2004 were on Great Lakes waters?

20% of non-resident respondent bass anglers fished bass on the great lakes with 6% fishing exclusively on these waters.

10. How many total organized bass fishing tournaments in Michigan did you participate in during 2003 and 2004 combined? (If none, write "0")

7.3% (n=20) of non-resident bass angler respondents fished in one or more bass tournaments. The number of tournaments fished ranged from 1 to 30 tournaments. The mean was 7.3, the median 6 tournaments. There were two modes: 1 and 5 tournaments.

11. During the season when it is legal to keep bass, what percent of the legal-sized bass that you catch do you usually *release*? (Please check one)

23.2% (94) ..... LESS THAN 25%

4.9% (20) ..... 25 - 49%

5.4% (22) ..... 50 - 74%

6.7% (27) ..... 75 - 89%

10.9% (44) ..... 90 - 99%

48.6% (197) ..... 100%

**12. THE REST OF THIS SURVEY CONCERNS BASS FISHING AND POSSIBLE BASS SEASON CHANGES IN MICHIGAN. IF YOU HAVE NO INTEREST IN THESE BASS ISSUES, PLEASE CHECK THE STATEMENT BELOW AND RETURN THIS SURVEY IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED.**

55.1% (291) I HAVE NO INTEREST IN BASS MANAGEMENT IN MICHIGAN. (PLEASE RETURN THE SURVEY)

44.7% (236) I AM INTERESTED IN BASS MANAGEMENT IN MICHIGAN. (PLEASE CONTINUE WITH THE SURVEY)

### Should Bass Fishing Regulations be Consistent or Variable Statewide?

*Consistent regulations:* It would be simpler to have one bass fishing regulation that fits all lakes in the state. Anglers would need to be aware of only a few rules and regulations. But a statewide regulation that adequately protects fish in one lake from over harvest may "overprotect" fish in another lake that do not need that much protection.

*Variable regulations:* Regulations could be more restrictive in lakes or regions where they are needed to protect the fisheries and less restrictive in other areas. This provides more flexibility and opportunity for anglers, but they would have to stay informed of the differences in regulations statewide if they fish in more than one area.

*The next 3 questions relate to the choice between consistent and variable regulations.*

Please consider the following two options and answer question 13 below:

- A. Provide consistent statewide regulations even though they may overprotect bass in some parts of Michigan in order to adequately protect bass in other lakes or regions.
- B. Provide regulations that vary among lakes and regions to provide more fishing opportunity around the state even though regulations would be more complex for the angler.

13. Please indicate whether you prefer one of the above options more than the other by checking one of the following:

20.2% (53) I STRONGLY PREFER A MORE THAN B	
13.3% (35) I SOMEWHAT PREFER A MORE THAN B	
9.5% (25) I AM UNDECIDED	
23.6% (62) I SOMEWHAT PREFER B MORE THAN A	
33.5% (88) I STRONGLY PREFER B MORE THAN A	

14. As it affects you and your own fishing opportunities, what is your opinion regarding the current level of statewide consistency in the Michigan bass fishing regulations? (Please check one.)

Michigan bass fishing regulations

- 9.2% (24) need to be much more consistent statewide
- 13.0% (34) need to be somewhat more consistent statewide
- 24.1% (63) have about the right level of consistency and variability statewide
- 19.5% (51) need to be somewhat more variable statewide
- 10.0% (26) need to be much more variable statewide
- 24.1% (63) I am undecided

15. How strongly would you approve or disapprove of having spring catch and release bass seasons only on certain Michigan lakes if fisheries biologists were confident that bass populations wouldn't be harmed?

27.6% (69) STRONGLY APPROVE	38.4% (96) APPROVE	12.0% (30) UNDECIDED	15.2% (38) DISAPPROVE	6.8% (17) STRONGLY DISAPPROVE
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**Please refer to the following information for the rest of the survey:**

**Harvest**

- C legal sized bass are kept by the angler for eating and/or trophies and are not released back into the water.

**Catch & Immediate Release or “C& IR”**

- C a bass is immediately returned back to the water once the hook is removed.

**Catch and Delayed Release or “C& DR”**

- C a bass is kept alive for a period (e.g. in a live well) and released later.

**How do Harvest and C& IR and C& DR impact the bass fishery?**

Harvest permanently removes bass. The size and number of bass removed are regulated to protect the fishery.

Research shows that most immediately released bass survive. However, some nest destruction by other fish occurs when adult bass guarding the nests are removed even for a short time (immediately released). Thus, C & IR during spawning time (approximately late April-mid June in Michigan) may impact on bass populations in some lakes or streams.

Without proper handling, delayed release can kill more bass than immediate release. The greatest risk is to nests left unguarded when adult bass cannot return quickly to protect them. When bass are

**Current preseason bass regulations:**

Except for select waters in Genesee, Muskegon, Newaygo, and Oakland counties, and on L. St. Clair, St. Clair River, and the Detroit River:

- C the bass season does not open until the Saturday before Memorial Day in May.
- C bass accidentally caught before the opener must be released immediately.

16. Which best describes your understanding of the preseason bass regulation before reading the explanation above? Please check one:

66.4% (166) I KNEW IT WAS ILLEGAL TO FISH SPECIFICALLY FOR BASS BEFORE THE OPENER AND THAT ACCIDENTAL CATCHES HAD TO BE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY.

11.6% (29) I THOUGHT IT WAS LEGAL TO TRY TO CATCH BASS BEFORE THE OPENER AS LONG AS YOU RELEASED THEM IMMEDIATELY.

22.0% (55) I HAD NO IDEA WHAT THE REGULATIONS WERE REGARDING FISHING FOR BASS BEFORE THE OPENER.

**Current bass season:**

On most Michigan waters, the current seasons allow fishing for bass from the Saturday before Memorial Day to December 31 (from 218 to 226 days); 5 bass of 14 inches can be kept each day.

**Some legal catch and immediate release (C&IR) opportunity could be provided during spawning season if the impact on bass numbers was offset in some way.**

17. How important is it to you to have a legal catch and immediate release (C& IR) bass season sometime in April and May before the legal harvest season opens? (Please check one)

25.6% (65) VERY IMPORTANT	24.0% (61) SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	12.6% (32) SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT	37.8% (96) NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
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18. If a catch and immediate release (C& IR) bass season was established in the spring before the bass harvest season opened, would it affect the amount of fishing you do during that time? (Please check one)

COMPARED TO THE NUMBER OF DAYS I USUALLY FISH DURING THAT PERIOD, I WOULD PROBABLY FISH..

6.7% (18) MANY MORE DAYS	21.7% (58) A FEW MORE DAYS	40.1% (107) ABOUT THE SAME	31.1% (83) I WOULD NOT FISH IN THAT PERIOD
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19. How strongly would you approve or disapprove of a decision to keep the current harvest season and not add a legal catch and immediate release season?

18.7% (50) STRONGLY APPROVE	29.2% (78) APPROVE	24.3% (65) UNDECIDED	17.6% (47) DISAPPROVE	9.4% (25) STRONGLY DISAPPROVE
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20. If an early catch and immediate release (C& IR) season of 4 to 5 weeks was opened, there are tradeoffs that would be necessary to offset the impact on bass populations. One possible tradeoff would be to delay the start of the harvest season by 2 to 3 weeks **after the Memorial Day Weekend**. (NOTE: While the proposed C&IR opportunities would apply to the St. Clair R., Detroit R. and L. St. Clair, the opening day of harvest season on these waters would remain the same.)

a) How strongly would you approve or disapprove of delaying the harvest season in order to have a C& IR season as described above? (Please check one)

11.3% (30) STRONGLY APPROVE	18.5% (49) APPROVE	19.2% (51) UNDECIDED	21.1% (56) DISAPPROVE	29.8% (79) STRONGLY DISAPPROVE
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b) How likely is it that you would still buy your annual fishing license if the above season changes were made? (Please check one)

64.8% (171) VERY LIKELY	17.0% (45) SOMEWHAT LIKELY	9.1% (24) UNDECIDED	4.2% (11) SOMEWHAT UNLIKELY	4.9% (13) VERY UNLIKELY
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21. Bass season has traditionally opened on the Saturday before Memorial Day. How important is it to you that this traditional opening date be left unchanged? (Please check one)

26.0% (68) VERY IMPORTANT TO ME; I WOULD BE STRONGLY OPPOSED TO CHANGING IT  
 18.7% (49) SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT; I WOULD PREFER IT NOT BE CHANGED  
 23.3% (61) SLIGHTLY IMPORTANT; BUT CHANGING IT WOULD NOT BE A BIG DEAL  
 22.5% (59) NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT; I DON'T CARE WHETHER IT IS CHANGED  
 9.5% (25) I AM UNDECIDED

22. Another option for increasing bass fishing may be to extend harvest season into the winter months (January through March) for ice fishing. How would a winter season allowing the harvest of bass affect the enjoyment you derive from winter ice fishing? (Please check one)

- 59.0% (158) I DO NOT ICE FISH
- 6.3% (17) ADD GREATLY TO MY WINTER ICE FISHING ENJOYMENT
- 7.1% (19) ADD SOMEWHAT TO MY WINTER ICE FISHING ENJOYMENT
- 3.0% (8) ADD SLIGHTLY TO MY WINTER ICE FISHING ENJOYMENT
- 21.6% (58) WOULD NOT AFFECT MY ENJOYMENT OF WINTER ICE FISHING
- 2.6% (7) UNDECIDED

23. How would a harvest season for bass in January through March most likely affect the amount of fishing you do in winter?

43.1% (115)	1.1% (3)	6.7% (18)	5.6% (15)	43.4% (116)	0.0% (0)
I WOULD NOT FISH AT THIS TIME	GREATLY INCREASE	SOMEWHAT INCREASE	SLIGHTLY INCREASE	NO EFFECT	UNDECIDED

24. Would you approve or disapprove of a proposal to delay the regular harvest season opener by 2 weeks in order to provide 10 weeks of winter harvest fishing for bass?

4.1% (11)	10.5% (28)	24.0% (64)	28.1% (75)	33.3% (89)
STRONGLY APPROVE	APPROVE	UNDECIDED	DISAPPROVE	STRONGLY DISAPPROVE

**THANK YOU.** If you have any comments on Michigan's bass regulations, please write them in the space below.

At the completion of this study, the results will be posted on the MDNR fisheries web page:

<http://www.michigan.gov/dnr> .